

collecting means rotatably mounted with respect to said central support member and adapted to collect threads passing through the thread guiding means of said valve support legs.

26. The valve holder of Claim 25 wherein said thread guiding and attaching means comprise an aperture in the distal end of each valve support leg.

27. The valve holder of Claim 25 wherein said thread guiding and attaching means comprise an angled slot in the distal end of each valve support leg.

28. In combination, a tricuspid prosthetic heart valve and a valve holder;

said valve including a stent comprising a sewing cushion and three fabric covered, axially extending commissure support struts;

said valve holder comprising a central support member, three spaced valve support legs extending radially from said support member, each of said legs including thread guiding and attaching means at the distal end thereof, and thread collecting means rotatably mounted with respect to said central support member and adapted to collect threads passing through the thread guiding means of said valve support legs;

said valve holder being positioned on the sewing cushion of said valve with the valve support legs in registry with said commissure support struts and attached to said sewing cushion by means of threads, each of said threads being attached at one end to the distal end of a valve support leg and passing

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therefrom through said sewing cushion, thence through the fabric cover at the tip of the corresponding commissure support strut, thence extending to the next adjacent commissure support strut and passing through the fabric cover at the tip thereof, thence passing through the sewing cushion and through the <sup>guiding</sup> thread guide means in the distal end of the corresponding valve support leg, and thereupon extending to and being attached to said thread collecting means, whereupon the tips of the commissure support struts are drawn toward one another as said threads are collected by said thread collecting means.

*a1*

Please amend the following Claims:

*a2*

3. (Amended) A valve holder comprising a central support member, three spaced valve support legs extending radially from said support member, each of said legs including thread guiding and attaching means at the distal end thereof, and thread collecting means associated with said central support member and adapted to collect threads passing through the thread guiding means of said valve support legs, said central support member comprising a hub and annular flange extending therefrom, said hub being adapted for association with said thread collecting means, [The valve holder of Claim 2 wherein] said thread collecting means [comprises] comprising an axle rotatable in said hub of said central support member whereby threads passing through the thread guiding means of said valve support legs are collected by rotating said axle to wind said threads therein.

4. (Amended) The valve holder of Claim 3 wherein said thread collecting means includes a [disk] base plate coaxially affixed at one end of said axle, said [disk] base plate having thread attaching means incorporated therein.

5. (Amended) The valve holder of Claim 4 wherein said central support member including a cylindrical skirt depending from said annular flange and encircling the [disk] base plate of said thread collecting means, said skirt including three apertures in registry with said valve support legs for the passage of thread.

In Claim 6, second line: Please change "disk" to --base plate--.

In Claim 7, second line: Please change "shaft" to --axle--.

In Claim 13, second line: Please change "disk" to --base plate--.

In Claim 14, third line: Please change "disk" to --base plate--.

In Claim 20, third line: Please change "be" to --being--.

21. (Amended) In combination, a porcine tissue heart valve and a valve holder, said valve including a stent comprising a sewing cushion and three fabric covered, axially extending commissure support struts;

said valve holder comprising a central support member, three spaced valve support legs extending radially from said support member, each of said legs including thread guiding and attaching means at the distal end thereof, and thread collecting means associated with said central support member and adapted to collect threads passing through the thread guiding means of said valve support legs;

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said central support member comprising a hub and annular flange extending therefrom, said hub being adapted for association with said thread collecting means,

[The combination of Claim 20 wherein] said thread collecting means of said valve holder [comprises] comprising an axle rotatable in said hub of said central support member,

said valve holder being positioned on the sewing cushion of said valve with the valve support legs in registry with said commissure support struts and attached to said sewing cushion by means of threads, each of said threads being attached at one end to the distal end of a valve support leg and passing therefrom through said sewing cushion, thence through the fabric cover at the tip of the corresponding commissure support strut, thence extending to the next adjacent commissure support strut and passing through the fabric cover at the tip thereof, thence passing through the sewing cushion and through the thread guide means in the distal end of the corresponding valve support leg, and thereupon extending to and being attached to said thread collecting means, whereupon the tips of the commissure support struts are drawn toward one another as said [whereby] threads passing through the thread guiding means of said valve support legs are collected by rotating said axle to wind said threads therein.

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22. (Amended) The combination of Claim 21 wherein said thread collecting means includes a [disk] base plate coaxially affixed at one end of said axle, said [disk] base plate having thread attaching means incorporated therein.